



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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November 3, 2009

TO: Supervisor Don Knabe, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: Wendy L. Watanabe
Auditor-Controller

Maria M. Oms
FOR

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – SAND HILL
GROUP HOME, INC. – SAND HILL GROUP HOME**

We have completed a review of Sand Hill Group Home (Group Home or Agency) operated by Sand Hill Group Home, Inc. The Group Home contracts with the Departments of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation.

Sand Hill Group Home is a six-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring review, the Group Home was providing services for six DCFS children.

Sand Hill Group Home is located in the Second District.

Scope of Review

The purpose of our review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. In addition, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, employee records, a facility inspection and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to address several deficient areas. Specifically, the Group Home needs to replace the carpet in the living room and hallway, clean the living room sofa and chair, make various repairs to bathrooms one and two, repair the security bars in bedroom one and purchase mattress covers and waterproof pads. The Group Home also needs to include all members of the treatment team and the child in the development and implementation of the Needs and Services Plans, provide children with increased recreational activities, opportunities to plan activities and to participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest. In addition, the Group Home needs to provide children with monthly clothing allowances, weekly monetary allowances and maintain current inventories of clothing provided to children.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management and DCFS. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Group Home management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank DCFS and Agency management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me or have your staff contact Don Chadwick at (213) 253-0301.

WLW:MMO:JET:DC:AA:jdh

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Ted Myers, Chief Deputy Director, DCFS
Susan Kerr, Senior Deputy Director, DCFS
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
Willie Hover, Board President, Sand Hill Group Home, Inc.
Gene Brown, Executive Director, Sand Hill Group Home, Inc.
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

Sand Hill Group Home, Inc.
Sand Hill Group Home
Los Angeles, California 90044
License Number: 191801773
Rate Classification Level: 9

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Sand Hill Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

Overall, the interior of the Group Home is adequately maintained. The common quarters are neat, there is adequate furniture and lighting, and the Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the living room furniture is dirty and the living room and hall carpet is dirty. In bathroom one, the shower door has lime and calcium build-up, the floor has water damage and the sink counter is damaged. In bathroom two, the tile and grout is stained with mildew, the area behind the toilet and sink cabinet is deteriorated and the area around the window is damaged.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean, orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable and children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate. However, in bedroom one, the bar on the window is not properly installed and provides no security. In addition, the beds do not have mattress pads and waterproof mattress covers.

The Group Home maintains age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendations

- 1. Sand Hill Group Home management:**
 - a. Clean the living room furniture.**
 - b. Replace the carpet in the living room and hall.**

- c. Clean the shower door and shower enclosure in bathroom one.
- d. Replace the damaged floor tile in bathroom one.
- e. Replace the sink countertop in bathroom one.
- f. Replace the tile in bathroom two.
- g. Replace the deteriorated sink enclosure in bathroom two.
- h. Repair the damaged area around the window in bathroom two.
- i. Repair the window bar in bedroom one.
- j. Purchase and make beds with mattress pads and waterproof covers.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The children meet the Group Home’s population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement and are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement. Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, comprehensive and include short and long term goals. However, all members of the treatment team and the child are not included in the development and implementation of the NSPs.

Recommendation

- 2. Sand Hill Group Home management include all members of the treatment team and the child in the development and implementation of the NSPs.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are attending school, are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs, and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills. Children are also provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendation

None.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient leisure time. While the Group Home provides transportation to and from recreational activities, the activities are insufficient and children are not provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. In addition, children do not participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest.

Recommendations

3. Sand Hill Group Home management:

- a. Provide children with increased recreational activities.**
- b. Provide children with opportunities to plan activities.**
- c. Provide children with the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest.**

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. Documentation confirms that children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Children are informed about their psychotropic medication and are aware of their right to refuse medication. Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendation

None.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Interviews with children

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, have private visitors and attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks. Children also receive voluntary medical, dental and psychiatric care.

Recommendation

None.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides items of necessity. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothing and clothing provided to children is of good quality. However, there is not sufficient documentation to show that children are provided with

the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance and clothing inventories are not consistently updated.

Children spend their allowances as they choose. However, the Group Home does not consistently provide the children with their weekly allowances.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

4. Sand Hill Group Home management:

- a. Provide children with monthly clothing allowances.**
- b. Maintain current inventories of clothing provided to children.**
- c. Provide children with weekly monetary allowances.**

VIII. Personnel Background Checks

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Sample size: Six

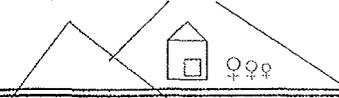
Comments:

The Group Home has obtained the required criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees.

Recommendation

None.

Sand Hill Group Home, Inc.



April 15, 2009

County of Los Angeles
Dept. of Auditor-Controller
500 W. Temple Street, Room 515-A
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2766

To Carla Carr, Children's Group Home Ombudsman

We are providing you with a response to the draft report dated October 12, 2008. As of May 1, 2009, Sand Hill Group Home, Inc. will temporarily close in order to make renovations.

1. Area of Review: Facility and Environment

A. Replace the carpet.

Corrective Action Plan:

The carpet will be cleaned or replaced by June 30th. The carpet will be cleaned every 6 months.

B. Clean the living room sofa and chair.

Corrective Action Plan:

The living room sofa and chair has been cleaned and will be cleaned as needed.

C. Clean the shower door and shower enclosure in bathroom one.

Corrective Action Plan:

The shower door and enclosure has been cleaned in bathroom one. It will be cleaned daily and deep cleaned once a week.

D. Replace the damaged floor tile in bathroom one.

Corrective Action Plan:

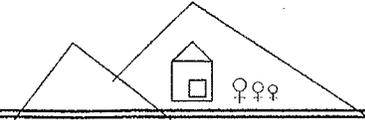
The tile will be replaced in bathroom one by June 30th.

E. Replace the sink countertop in bathroom one.

Corrective Action Plan:

The sink countertop in bathroom one will be replaced by June 30th.

Sand Hill Group Home, Inc.



(Continued)

F. Replace the tile and bathtub in bathroom two.

Corrective Action Plan:

The tile will be replaced by June 30th. The tub has been cleaned in bathroom two.

G. Replace the deteriorated sink enclosure in bathroom two.

Corrective Action Plan:

The sink enclosure in bathroom two will be replaced by June 30th.

H. Repair the area around the window in bathroom two.

Corrective Action Plan:

The area around the window in bathroom two will be repaired by June 30th.

I. Repair the window bar in bedroom one.

Corrective Action Plan:

The window bar in bedroom one will be repaired by June 30th.

J. Make all beds with mattress pads and waterproof covers.

Corrective Action Plan:

All beds now have waterproof mattress pads as of October 14, 2008.

Gene Brown, Executive Director, is responsible for implementing and maintaining the above noted corrective actions in the area of facility and environment.

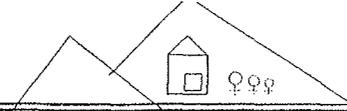
2. Area of Review: Program Services

A. Sand Hill Group Home management document the participation of the treatment team, and the input of the child in the development and implementation on the NSP's.

Corrective Action Plan:

Sand Hill Group Home administrative staff and LCSW will ensure the participation of the treatment team and the input of the child in the development and implementation of the NSP's. LaRonica Whitehurst, administrator, will ensure that the corrections will be implemented and maintained as intended.

Sand Hill Group Home, Inc.



(Continued)

3. Area of Review: Educational and Emancipation Services

There are no Recommendations for this section.

4. Area of Review: Recreation and Activities

A. **Provide the children with increased recreational activities on and off site.**

✓ ***Corrective Action Plan***

The children will have more recreational activities in the facility and two outside events away from the facility per month. The residents attend Dixon Recovery Monday thru Thursday. Dixon Recovery provides various activities which include basketball, games, group sessions, tutoring and computer games. They also take the children to Magic Mountain, etc. Sand Hill will record the residents activities.

B. **Provide children with opportunities to plan activities.**

✓ ***Corrective Action Plan***

The children will be provided the opportunity to plan activities.

C. **Provide children with the opportunity to participate in extracurricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest.**

✓ ***Corrective Action Plan***

The children will have the opportunity to participate in activities they are interested in.

LaRonica Whitehurst, administrator, will ensure that the above corrections in the area of Recreation and Activities will be implemented and maintained as intended.

5. Area of Review: Psychotropic Medication

There are no recommendations for this section.

6. Area of Review: Personal Rights

There are no Recommendations for this section.

7. Clothing and Allowances

A. **Provide children with monthly clothing allowances.**

Sand Hill Group Home, Inc.



(Continued)

Corrective Action Plan

The children will be provided with monthly clothing allowances as determine by the contract.

B. Maintain current and accurate documentation of clothing.

Corrective Action Plan

✓ Staff will conduct a bimonthly clothing inventory on each child

C. Provide children with monetary allowances on a weekly basis.

Corrective Action Plan

✓ The children will be provided allowances on a weekly basis. Amounts will be no less than determined by the contract.

LaRonica Whitehurst, administrator, will ensure that the above corrections in the area of Clothing and Allowances will be implemented and maintained as intended.

8. Personnel Background Checks

There are no recommendations for this section.

Sincerely,

LaRonica Whitehurst

LaRonica Whitehurst
Administrator